

Message Text

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15

ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2292

INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL MADRAS

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

USIA WASHDC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, IN, BG

SUBJ: BANGLADESH: GOI DENIES BORDER CLASHES AND PRESS COVERAGE

1. A GOI SPOKESMAN ON NOVEMBER 17 DESCRIBED AS "UTTERLY FALSE AND MISCHIEVOUS AND A PURE FIGMENT OF IMAGINATION" REPORTS OF CLASHES BETWEEN INDIAN AND BANGLADESH SECURITY FORCES. HE SAID THESE REPORTS "ARE APPARENTLY CONJURED UP BY INTERESTED QUARTERS TO CREATE MISUNDERSTANDING AND TENSION BETWEEN INDIA AND BANGLADESH. THE BORDER BETWEEN INDIA AND BANGLADESH REMAINS QUIET AND PEACEFUL WITH NORMAL MOVEMENT
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OF PASSENGER AND GOODS TRAFFIC ACROSS IT."

2. THE GOI SPOKESMAN ISSUED ANOTHER STATEMENT ON NOVEMBER 17 DISCLOSING THAT A GRENADE HAD BEEN DISCOVERED ON NOVEMBER 15 WITHIN THE PRECINCTS OF THE RESIDENCE OF THE INDIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER AT DACCA. "FORTUNATELY THE GRENADE WAS FOUND IN TIME AND WAS DISPOSED OF BY DETONATION WITH THE HELP OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES." THE SPOKESMAN SAID THAT INDIA HAD EXPRESSED ITS CONCERN OVER THE SAFETY OF ITS NATIONALS AND THEIR PROPERTY EARLIER THIS MONTH AND STATED THAT THESE STILL "REMAIN A MATTER OF CONCERN." HE NOTED THAT "THIS CONCERN WAS MISREPRESENTED IN CERTAIN SECTIONS OF THE FOREIGN PRESS AS A PRELIMINARY TO SOME KIND OF INTERVENTIONIST MOVE BY INDIA. THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA HAS REPEATEDLY DECLARED THAT IT CONSIDERS DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN THE FRONTIERS OF BANGLADESH AS PURELY THE INTERNAL AFFAIR OF BANGLADESH."

3. THE ABOVE STATEMENTS RECEIVED PROMINENT FRONT PAGE COVERAGE IN THE PRESS NOVEMBER 18. MANY PAPERS HIGHLIGHTED A REUTER'S REPORT UNDER SUCH TITLES AS "US DENIES INDIAN ARMY INVOLVEMENT" AND "US CLEARS DELHI," WHICH CLAIMED THAT US OFFICIALS SAID "THERE WAS NO INDICATION THAT INDIAN FORCES WERE INVOLVED IN CLASHES ALONG THE BORDER WITH BANGLADESH." STATE DEPARTMENT SOURCES WERE REPORTED AS EXPLAINING THAT FIGHTING HAD BEEN TAKING PLACE ALONG THE FRONTIER FOR SEVERAL YEARS APPARENTLY BETWEEN GUERILLAS AND GOB FORCES. THE DEPARTMENT SOURCES WERE SAID TO BE COMMENTING ON A PRESS REPORT THAT INDIAN ARMY OFFICERS WERE BACKING THE GUERILLAS. (COMMENT: THIS IS CONTRARY TO FUNSETH'S NOVEMBER 17 STATEMENT CARRIED IN THE WIRELESS FILE THAT THE DEPARTMENT HAS NO CONFIRMATION OF A REPORTED ATTACK ON THREE BANGLADESH BORDER OUTPOSTS BUT THAT EMBASSY DACCA "HAS HEARD SUCH RUMORS."

3. THE CPI'S DAILY, "PATRIOT", WHICH APPARENTLY HAS A SOURCE IN CALCUTTA NOT AVAILABLE TO THE OTHER PAPERS, FRONT PAGES A REPORT ON THE DETERIORATING SECURITY SITUATION IN BANGLADESH UNDER THE TITLE, "NAVAL OFFICERS, MEN KILLED IN CHITTAGONG CLASHES." AT LEAST SEVEN "TOP OFFICIALS" OF THE NAVY AND NEARLY 40 SAILORS WERE REPORTED KILLED. MAJOR GENERAL ZIAUR RAHMAN AND NAVY CHIEF COMMODORE MUSHARRAF HOSSAIN WERE SAID TO HAVE GONE TO THE PORT NOVEMBER 17 THE MARTIAL LAW LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ADMINISTRATORS, ACCORDING TO PATRIOT, HAD LONG MEETINGS ON NOVEMBER 16 AND 17 AT WHICH FORMER PRESIDENT KHONDAKER MOSHTAQUE AHMED ATTENDED. PATRIOT CONCLUDES THAT THIS PROVES THAT HE IS THE "POLITICAL MENTOR" OF THE PRESENT "MILITARY REGIME." DACCA UNIVERSITY CAMPUS IS SAID TO BE DESERTED AND EXAMS POSTPONED.

4. THE NOVEMBER 18 PRESS ALSO REPORTED THAT BANGLADESH

PRESIDENT SAYEM SENT BIRTHDAY GREETINGS TO PRIME MINISTER
GANDHI. WE WISHED HER "HEALTH, HAPPINESS AND LONG LIFE".
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